



Adding to a series of House Republican bills aimed at reforming small business contracting, Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., on Monday introduced legislation to reduce fraud by improving procurement training and referring more cases to the Small Business Administration's inspector general.

The House Small Business Committee earlier this month approved six bills designed to help small businesses win more federal contracts. On Thursday, the panel plans to mark up several more, including the one from Coffman, who chairs the Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Regulations.

The Contracting Oversight for Small Business Jobs Act (H.R. 4206) would amend the Small Business Act to boost penalties for fraud "so that the cost of litigation will no longer outweigh the government's recovery," Coffman's staffer said .

The legislation also would raise penalties for companies that misrepresent their size and eligibility for small business contracts, while helping firms comply with related rules. According to an email from Coffman's staff, the bill would provide a "safe harbor" for small businesses that make a "good faith effort" to comply while providing a new statutory framework for the SBA's Office of Hearings and Appeals, which decides which businesses qualify.

The bill also would add new requirements for using the suspension and debarment process to pursue cases of fraud, making greater use of the SBA's inspector general.

*By Charles S. Clark*

[Government Executive](#)

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